

# Propaganda Student Handout

## Types of Propaganda

There are many techniques commonly used in the dissemination of propaganda. Use this handout to help you identify different types of propaganda throughout Cold War.

**BANDWAGON:** The basic idea behind the bandwagon approach is just that, "getting on the bandwagon." The propagandist puts forth the idea that everyone is doing this, or everyone supports this person/cause, so should you. The bandwagon approach appeals to the conformist in all of us: No one wants to be left out of what is perceived to be a popular trend.

**EXAMPLE:** Everyone in Lemmingtown is behind Jim Duffie for Mayor. Shouldn't you be part of this winning team?

**TESTIMONIAL:** This is the celebrity endorsement of a philosophy, movement or candidate. In advertising, for example, athletes are often paid millions of dollars to promote sports shoes, equipment and fast food. In political circles, movie stars, television stars, rock stars and athletes lend a great deal of credibility and power to a political cause or candidate. Just a photograph of a movie star at political rally can generate more interest in that issue/candidate or cause thousands, sometimes millions, of people to become supporters.

**EXAMPLE:** "Sam Slugger", a baseball Hall of Famer who led the pros in hitting for years, appears in a television ad supporting Mike Politico for U.S. Senate. Since Sam is well known and respected in his home state and nationally, he will likely gain Mr. Politico many votes just by his appearance with the candidate.

**PLAIN FOLKS:** Here the candidate or cause is identified with common people from everyday walks of life. The idea is to make the candidate/cause come off as grassroots and all-American.

**EXAMPLE:** After a morning speech to wealthy Democratic donors, Bill Clinton stops by McDonald's for a burger, fries, and photo-op.

**TRANSFER:** Transfer employs the use of symbols, quotes or the images of famous people to convey a message not necessarily associated with them. In the use of transfer, the candidate/speaker attempts to persuade us through the indirect use of something we respect, such as a patriotic or religious image, to promote his/her ideas. Religious and patriotic images may be the most commonly used in this propaganda technique but they are not alone. Sometimes even science becomes the means to transfer the message.

**EXAMPLE:** The environmentalist group PEOPLE PROMOTING PLANTS, in its attempt to prevent a highway from destroying the natural habitat of thousands of plant species, produces a television ad with a "scientist" in a white lab coat explaining the dramatic consequences of altering the food chain by destroying this habitat.

**FEAR:** This technique is very popular among political parties and PACs (Political Action Committees) in the U.S. The idea is to present a dreaded circumstance and usually follow it up with the kind of behavior needed to avoid that horrible event.

**EXAMPLE:** The Citizens for Retired Rights present a magazine ad showing an elderly couple living in poverty because their social security benefits have been drastically cut by the Republicans in Congress. The solution? The CRR urges you to vote for Democrats.

**LOGICAL FALLACIES:** Applying logic, one can usually draw a conclusion from one or more established premises. In the type of propaganda known as the logical fallacy, however, the premises may be accurate but the conclusion is not.

**EXAMPLE:**

- \* Premise 1: Bill Clinton supports gun control.
- \* Premise 2: Communist regimes have always supported gun control.
- \* Conclusion: Bill Clinton is a communist.

We can see in this example that the Conclusion is created by a twisting of logic, and is therefore a fallacy.

**GLITTERING GENERALITIES:** This approach is closely related to what is happening in TRANSFER (see above). Here, a generally accepted virtue is usually employed to stir up favorable emotions. The problem is that these words mean different things to different people and are often manipulated for the propagandists' use. The important thing to remember is that in this technique the propagandist uses these words in a positive sense. They often include words like: democracy, family values (when used positively), rights, civilization, even the word "American."

**EXAMPLE:** An ad by a cigarette manufacturer proclaims to smokers: Don't let them take your rights away! ("Rights" is a powerful word, something that stirs the emotions of many, but few on either side would agree on exactly what the 'rights' of smokers are.)

**NAME-CALLING:** This is the opposite of the GLITTERING GENERALITIES approach. Name-calling ties a person or cause to a largely perceived negative image.

**EXAMPLE:** In a campaign speech to a logging company, the Congressman referred to his environmentally conscious opponent as a "tree hugger."

## **PROPAGANDA**

"Telegraph fully all news you get and when there is no news send rumors."---From the editor of the Chicago Times during the American Civil War.

This quote gives us a glimpse into the importance of information during wartime, even if the information is "made up." Often information is manufactured in order to crystallize public opinion for a particular cause or candidate. This kind of information is sometimes referred to as propaganda, more accurately defined as "the dissemination of ideas and information for the purpose of inducing or intensifying specific attitudes and actions."(ENCARTA Online, 5/20/98). Throughout the Cold War, a war fought without the direct use of weapons, propaganda was one of the most powerful of arms.

In this unit, students will learn more about what propaganda is and how to identify the different types of propaganda. Knowledge of propaganda is a valuable asset not just in the study of the Cold War and World History, but also towards the goal of media literacy.

As students watch the Cold War episodes and as they read a variety of primary and secondary resources, have them identify the various forms of propaganda, analyzing the goals and effects of the messages on the intended audience.

## **General Questions for Discussion:**

1. What is propaganda? Find a definition of this term and share it with the class. Have you ever seen or heard propaganda used? If so, relate what you saw/heard and whether it had an effect on you. Why do you think that governments and political leaders often employ propaganda? Discuss how propaganda is a powerful tool when combined with mass media.
2. Who was Joseph McCarthy? What was the role of the Committee on Un-American Activities? How did the investigation affect the lives and livelihoods of many individuals, especially those in Hollywood? Cite examples of propaganda used throughout these hearings. Citing McCarthyism, discuss how propaganda pushes the limits of free speech.
3. Conduct research to learn more about Radio Free Europe and its mission. How did the west attempt to use radio waves to penetrate the Iron Curtain? Did the dissemination of information sponsored by the free world have an effect on the people of the Soviet bloc? Share and discuss your findings. In your mind, does the use of Radio Free Europe by the west constitute an exercise in propaganda? Why or why not?
4. The Cold War was, on many occasions, a war of words. From the Bay of Pigs showdown to Cold-War era movies, the Red Scare was a common theme throughout the United States, while the slogan "Down with U.S. Imperialists" was commonly heard throughout the East bloc. Have students interview older family members to find out what they remember about Cold War propaganda in their lives: Who were the "bad guys" in the movies they watched? In the books/comics they read? How was everyday life affected by anti-Communist propaganda ("duck and cover" air-raid drills)? Have students share their interview information with the class. Generate a class discussion about the use of political propaganda today. Where do students see/hear it? Is there propaganda in popular culture today? Discuss.

## STUDENT HANDOUT

### **ACTIVITIES FOR USE WITH THIS HANDOUT:**

1. Have students work in groups to list the different examples of propaganda they saw throughout the video. Using this HANDOUT as their guide, have them identify each example by type and share their examples with the class. In class discussion, analyze each of the examples and examine what it is the propagandist wants you to believe. How can an intelligent observer avoid being trapped by these techniques? How did both sides use propaganda as a weapon? How does propaganda compare in power or strength with military weapons?
2. CNN Interactive's companion site to the Cold War, [cnn.com/coldwar](http://cnn.com/coldwar) will publish TIME and Pravda articles for each episode. (These articles will be available the day after the episode airs on CNN.) Have students choose select episodes and juxtapose the account provided in the TIME article with that in the Pravda article. Students will be able to see how the same event can be reported differently and, depending on the spin, can suit the needs of the magazine and newspaper editors.
3. Also on [cnn.com/coldwar](http://cnn.com/coldwar), you will find examples of Cold War culture from both sides of the Iron Curtain. Students can search through these materials to find examples of several different types of propaganda. They should assess the effect propaganda has had on maintaining a 'Cold War culture' even after the Cold War has been declared over.
4. Have students search the newspaper and news magazines for at least three examples of propaganda, identify each type and paste them onto posterboard, along with explanations. Post each student's work. Allow all students time to examine the examples and select one to counter in a short essay.
5. Propaganda techniques are used in advertising as well as in politics. Challenge students to find examples of advertising propaganda and share them with the class. Is advertising propaganda "dangerous?" Discuss. How would students guide

younger siblings and others towards being more critical viewers of the media and its messages?

### **Propaganda sites on the Web:**

\* <http://www.easynet.co.uk/LIRE/jawsrce.htm#fn12>

Journalists at War

\* [http://www.dcmilitary.com/pt\\_coldwar-words816.html](http://www.dcmilitary.com/pt_coldwar-words816.html)

Cold War won partially with words

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<http://encarta.msn.com/find/concise/default.asp?vs=x97&la=na&ty=1&vo=25&ti=046aa000>

propaganda, definition, types, etc.

\* <http://www.stmartin.edu/~dprice/cold.war.html>

LOTS of Cold War links

\* <http://www.rferl.org/>

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

\* <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/~jaa2m/papers/stambaugh/mcarthy.html>

mccarthyism and the Cold War

\* <http://carmen.artsci.washington.edu/propaganda/contents.htm>

Propaganda unit

\* <http://yn.la.ca.us/cec/ceclang/ceclang.25.txt>

teacher's activity, grades 5-12, types of propaganda

\* <http://carmen.artsci.washington.edu/propaganda/war1.htm>

wwI propaganda

\* <http://hoshi.cic.sfu.ca/calj/cjc/BackIssues/16.2/garay.html>

Churchill after 1945---prop or coercion?

\* <http://rs6.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/psources/types.html>

analysis of sources

\* <http://www.community.net/~gic/articles/adv.html>

advertising and propaganda

\* <http://carmen.artsci.washington.edu/propaganda/home.htm>

good site, propaganda explanation